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SOVIET MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The Soviet military-industrial complex is a conglomeration of large complex organizations laboring under heavy bureaucratic pressures, conflicts, and constraints. Final decisions on specific weapon systems probably emerge from a complicated process of pulling and hauling. We know that debate and competition are present among a variety of vested interests with differing perceptions of Soviet military requirements and goals. Often the results reflect elements of compromise and probably seldom satisfy completely any particular leader or interest group. Generally this process tends to blunt innovation, and for the most part changes in Soviet forces take place gradually.

Of the fifty-seven Ministries which constitute the central economic apparatus in the Soviet Union, there are eight which are primarily responsible for the support of the national defense effort. The Defense Industry is responsible for conventional weapons. The Electronics Industry produces electronic parts and components, and the Radio Industry assembles these items. We have assumed that general machine building continues to be the overseer of the missile and space programs. Medium machine building is the old Soviet euphemism for research and development and production of nuclear weapons and warheads. The responsibilities of the Aviation Industry and the Shipbuilding Industry are apparent in their titles. (Some of the Chemical Industry is also part of the military-industrial complex.) In manpower terms, these industries employ an estimated 2.5 million workers - more than three times the number of workers in the General Motors Corporation.

The Ministries are run by men who have had long tenures in the defense-industrial sector of the economy. Some are military officers - an admiral, for example, heads the shipbuilding industry. Many of them began their careers during World War II, and have maintained their positions through a major Ministerial reorganization in 1965. The close tie of these industries with the Soviet military is further demonstrated by the presence of the industrial leaders at the annual ceremonies for the graduates of military academies, which in many ways are similar to our war colleges.

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The chairman of the commission is thought to be Leonid Smirnov, who has been associated with organizations responsible for the development and production of military equipment. He is a very important functionary, but stands in the shadow of Dimitri Ustinov.

Ustinov is considered to be the general overseer of military production programs in the Soviet Union, as well as a close associate of higher Party officials. As People's Commissar for Armaments under Stalin, Ustinov gained a governmental position of importance in the administration of a large defense industry. He chaired the Supreme Council of the National Economy from 1963 through March 1965, when he helped to engineer the major ministerial reforms in the defense industries. He now holds a major executive function in the Party's Secretariat; he is a nonvoting member of the Party Politburo, and serves in effect as the Deputy for military-industrial problems to Party chief Brezhnev.

Ustinov, above all, is closely associated with the entire defense industry complex, especially the missile and space programs. He is also closely tied to the military establishment itself, and several reports alleged that an attempt was made in 1967 to install the civilian Ustinov in the post of Minister of Defense.

Technically, responsibility for programs of military production resides with the Council of Ministers chaired by Kosygin. Evidence suggests, however, that the Party has a substantial role in the actual planning and establishment of military priorities. Brezhnev, as General Secretary, is, therefore, in a strong position to exercise an effective voice in such decisions. He can marshal extensive support through his Party Secretariat, which is the Party's executive body, and the Politburo, which is the Party's ultimate decision-making body. He also maintains connections with the Council of Ministers and the military leadership.

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